GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:713
ANSWERED ON:21.11.2007
FACILITIES FOR HAJ PILGRIMS
Murmu Shri Hemlal

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the Government for augmenting the facilities provided to Haj pilgrims; and

(b) the details of financial assistance and the services rendered to Haj pilgrims in the country, state wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) The Government of India makes arrangements to facilitate the transportation of 110,000 pilgrims going to Saudi Arabia for Haj 2007 through the Haj Committee of India and facilitates provision of accommodation and other logistical support for them. For efficient management and supervision of Haj arrangements, seasonal local staff, supervisors, data entry operators, drivers and messengers have been appointed by the Consulate General of India, Jeddah. In addition, Doctors, Nurses and other para-medical staff, Coordinators, Assistant Haj Officers, Haj Assistants and Khadimul Hujjaj are sent from India on short-term deputation to Saudi Arabia. A hospital in Makkah and branch offices-cum-dispensaries in Makkah and Madina are set up for Haj pilgrims. Medicines provided at these dispensaries and hospital are supplied from India and also procured locally. Eight additional ambulances for the Haj Mission in Jeddah have been sanctioned which would substantially add to the medical facilities which are provided to the pilgrims. The Government is also making arrangements for providing polio, meningitis and influenza vaccinations for the pilgrims. The Haj Committee of India is providing to the pilgrims information regarding confirmation of their seats, travel documents, transportation, accommodation, release of foreign exchange, embarkation points and departure dates etc. The Government has taken a number of decisions to streamline the functioning of Private Tour Operators so that they provide proper services and facilities for 47000 pilgrims. Varanasi has been introduced as 16th Embarkation Point from this year. The Government would ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made to facilitate the travel of the Haj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia through all the 16 embarkation points in India to Jeddah and Madinah. Both Air India and Saudi Arabian Airlines have rendered service to the pilgrims in this effort.

(b) The expenditure incurred by the Government for the Haj 2006-II is estimated as Rs.23,35,42,728/- and subsidy granted (Provisional) is Rs. 348.00 crores.